

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 02394 010328Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 VO-05 CA-01 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 /032 W

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O P 310840Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE
INFO INS/CO WASHDC PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0355

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED REFS TO TEXT)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS:SREF
SUBJECT: ALLEGED HIJACKERS FROM VAM CO-24
REF: A) SINGAPORE 2097 B) STATE 130559 C) HONGKONG 6550

1. THE SIX CREW MEMBERS AND ONE PASSENGER ACCOMPANIED BY HIS
INFANT SON WERE INTERVIEWED IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFTEL C BY AUBREY
VERDUN, VICE CONSUL AND JAMES M. BAILEY, IMMIGRATION OFFICER.
THE CONSULAR AND IMMIGRATION INTERVIEWS TOOK PLACE ON MAY
25, 1978 AND ON MAY 30, 1978, RESPECTIVELY. THE CONCLUSION
INDEPENDENTLY REACHED BY BOTH OFFICERS WAS THAT THE HIJACKING
OF THE VESSEL DOES NOT COME UNDER THE PURVIEW OF SECTION
212(A)(9) OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT.
THIS CONCLUSION IS BASED ON THREE MAJOR FACTORS:

A) MOST OF THE GROUP IS INTER-RELATED. TRUONG VAN
TAI, WHO MASTERMINDED THE OPERATION WAS ACTING ON THE BEHEST
OF HIS MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER AT VUNG TAU TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS
FOR THE ESCAPE OF THEIR ENTIRE EXTENDED FAMILY. HOWEVER,
PLAN TO PICK UP 150 FAMILY MEMBERS AT VUNG TAU WAS THWARTED
BY COASTAL PATROLS, HIGH SEAS AND THE GRANDMOTHER'S LAST
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MINUTE REFUSAL TO LEAVE VIETNAM. THE HIJACK WAS FINANCED
BY THE GRANDMOTHER'S BROTHER WHO WAS NOT AMONG ESCAPEES.
NONE OF THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED RECEIVED ANY TYPE OF REMU-
NERATION AND ALL CLAIMED TO HAVE FLED FOR ECONOMIC/POLITICAL
REASONS.

B) THERE WAS NO ACTUAL PHYSICAL VIOLENCE ABOARD THE VESSEL

DURING THE HIJACK.

C) ALL INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED, EXCEPT ONE, ADMITTED THEY WERE AWARE THEIR ACT COULD BE CONSIDERED PIRACY; AND THEY ALL EVINCED A DESIRE TO RETURN THE VESSEL TO THE SRV.

THE TAPE RECORDINGS MADE DURING THE INTERVIEWS WITH MR. BAILEY ARE BEING POUCHED TO INS DIDIR HONG KONG PER INSTRUCTIONS.

3. GOS, ESPECIALLY ANXIOUS TO HAVE THIS CASE RESOLVED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS, HAS ASKED EMBASSY TO SPEED PROCESSING. TO ACCOMMODATE GOS IN THIS, WE WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL FOR EXPEDITIOUS HANDLING. HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

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